The Border Abbeys in the Sixteenth Century

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A glance at the map reveals how close the four Border abbeys lay to each other: not one was more than a dozen miles from the other three. Each belonged to a different order: Kelso to the black monks (Benedictine), Jedburgh to the black canons (Augustinians), Melrose to the white monks (Cistercians), Dryburgh to the white canons (Premonstratensians). In the sixteenth century, however, the differences between them are overshadowed by the similarities, the result of similar circumstances and developments. In this discussion, the numbers in each monastery will be treated first, then the superiors. Whatever may have been the differences in internal life and observance from one monastery to another, two factors common to all will be apparent: the destruction caused by the English invasions, which affected the size of the communities, and the development whereby most monastic superiors were appointed from outwith the communities.

The method of determining the size of communities has been outlined in this journal.[1] Briefly, the main source is the documents signed by the brethren or the occasional list of those present at some capitular act, but to each list must be added the names of any absentees. The proof that a monk or canon belonged to the community at a given time, in spite of his name not being found in the relevant document, is that he signed or was mentioned in similar documents both before and after.

In 1462 it was stated that only 17 or 18 priest-monks were in Kelso. The same source added that the monastery used to sustain 30 to 40 monks,[2] and a description of Kelso in 1517 gave 36-40 professed monks as the complement in time of peace.[3] The first incontrovertible evidence, however, is in August 1523, when 23 monks (besides the abbot), signed;[4] and this must be considered a minimum, as there are no other documents in that period to provide names of absentees. In 1534, 19 monks signed (17 of those signing in 1523 and two new names)[5] and this too must be considered a minimum. Better documentation begins in 1538; in five documents between June 1538 and February 1540 a total of 22 are recorded, all of whom are recorded together on 29 October

[1] M. Dilworth, "Monks and Ministers after 1560", *ante*, xviii, (1972-4), 201-2.
[2] *Cal. Papal Letters* [hereafter, *CPL*], xi, 445.
[3] Theiner, *Monumenta*, 528, col. 1.
[4] Scottish Record Office [hereafter, SRO], GD86/87, Fraser Charters.
[5] *Laing Chrs.*, no. 396, where for "Peter Wicars" read "Patrick", for "Crostaris" read "Crosnop", for "Pape" read "Paton" (original checked in Edinburgh University Library).

1539.[6] No new name is found after 1538, however, and the numbers signing declined: only 15 sign in 1548 and 1550,[7] and only seven in 1554 and 1556.[8]

The dramatic drop in numbers from 15 to seven between 1550 and 1554 could perhaps be partly explained by the presence of five monks in Lesmahagow, a cell of Kelso, though Lesmahagow did have monks other than those normally resident at Kelso.[9] In 1556 these "fiv brethir" received portions of barley and flour as well as their pension and habit silver.[10] Only five monks are recorded at Kelso after the Reformation (1565-71),[11] and only two in 1576.[12] It can reasonably be presumed that Thomas Turnet, reader at Yetholm in 1574,[13] was a monk of Kelso: a Thomas Turnet signed at Kelso 1538-71 and was dead by 1584.[14] The name is not common and Yetholm is only seven miles from Kelso. Probably he continued to reside in his quarters at Kelso. On the other hand, there is insufficient evidence to identify Thomas Simson, found at Kelso 1538-76 and dead by 1579,[15] with the Thomas Simson who was reader at Covington in 1567: the name is common and Covington is a considerable distance from Kelso, where Simson signed in 1565 and from 1569 on.[16]

There is no clear evidence of decline in numbers between 1523 and 1538, in spite of the damage inflicted by the English in 1523. The decline from 22 in 1539 to 15 a decade later, with no new recruit appearing after 1538, is much more significant and is surely due, at least in part, to the punitive destruction in 1542-45.[17] There is also a fair probability that at least some monks were killed in September 1545. The English reported that twelve monks were among the defenders who took refuge in the steeple, which was then captured with loss of life.[18]

Evidence for numbers at Jedburgh is very scanty. Eight canons were listed as witnesses in 1464 but it is impossible to say if they

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[6] *Laing Chrs.*, nos. 423, 434, 441; SRO, NP1/196, Notarial Protocol Book of Robert Lawson, fos. 79 (29 Oct. 1539), 81v.

[7] *Laing Chrs.*, nos. 540, 541; SRO, GD86/150.

[8] *Hist. MSS. Comm. Milne Home of Wedderburn* (1902) no. 557; SRO, GD86/176.

[9] Denes William Craw and Robert Smaw(?), not found in Kelso documents, are recorded at Lesmahagow in 1559 (SRO, JC1/11, Justiciary Court Books, fo. 78).

[10] *Kelso Liber*, 479, 480, 482.

[11] SRO, RH6/1996, 2160, Register House Charters; *Laing Chrs.*, no. 857, where for "Burnet" read "Turnet".

[12] *Laing Chrs.*, no. 934.

[13] *Wodrow Misc.*, 375; C. H. Haws, *Scottish Parish Clergy at the Reformation, 1540-1574* (Scot. Record Soc., 1972) [hereafter Haws, *Clergy*], 249.

[14] *Reg. Sec. Sig.* [hereafter *RSS*], viii, no. 2495.

[15] *RSS*, vii, no. 1987.

[16] Haws, *Clergy*, 48; see also *Laing Chrs.*, no. 868.

[17] Easson, *Religious Houses* (2nd edn. 1.B. Cowan, 1976) [hereafter *MRHS*], 68.

[18] *Letters and Papers . . . of the reign of Henry VIII* [hereafter *LP Henry VIII*], xx, pt. 2, nos. 347, 533, 633. The statement that twelve monks were said to be killed (*Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. D. McRoberts, 1962, p. 240) is a mis-reading.

comprised the whole community or only part.[19] In addition to the abbot, ten canons signed in 1516.[20] There were ten canons in 1528,[21] seven or eight in 1542,[22] seven in 1547,[23] five or six in 1553.[24] Two of the names in 1542 are new, but none of those in 1553. One man signing in 1542-53 is also attested in a non-conventual document.[25]

The question has to be asked: was the community in fact so small, or have canons gone unrecorded? Certainly, there were a few not recorded in the above-mentioned Jedburgh documents. Even if we disregard the alleged canon said to have been the father of Mr John Rutherford (provost of St Salvator's, born *c.* 1520),[26] there is still Andrew Hume who went to Rome on his personal business in 1531.[27] Jedburgh also had three cells or dependent priories: Blantyre, Canonbie and Restennet. Though they were non-conventual, the prior resident in them could be, as traditionally he should have been, from the Jedburgh mother-house; thus Dene Robert Cottis, prior of Blantyre 1520-36, was a "profest channoun" of Jedburgh.[28] The numbers signing at Jedburgh must therefore be taken as a minimum, but even so the community was small.

Four canons survived the Reformation. This is known with certainty because in 1587, when the treasury had claimed the portions of 18 deceased canons for the years 1583-85, the defence was made that only four canons were alive in 1560.[29] Ironically, these four are quite well attested in the post-Reformation period. Three were dead by 1583, as we learn from the same document. William Moscrop, at Jedburgh 1516-53, is probably the Mr William Moscrop who was "minister of the sacraments" in 1563 in a group of places west of Kirkcudbright.[30] Though distant from Jedburgh, they include St Mary's Isle, an

[19] T.H. Cockburn-Hood, *The Rutherfurds of that Ilk* (1884), p. xxiii. The eight do not include John Turnbull, found in 1479 (SRO, CH6/6/1, Chartularies, fo. lv.) or Thomas Morisone, found 1487 (*ibid.* fo. 2; SRO, GD40/1/156, Lothian papers).

[20] SRO, GD40/7/2.

[21] SRO, GD40/7/4, with James Blyth and Patrick Walker found before and after.

[22] SRO, GD40/3/402, with James Blair and perhaps William Todryk found before and after.

[23] SRO, GD40/7/10. I am grateful to Miss M.M. Baird, of the Scottish Record Office, who drew my attention to various documents in this deposit.

[24] SRO, GD40/1/227, with perhaps William Todryk found before and after. A man of this name is found at Jedburgh from 1516 to 1583; if, as seems more likely, it is not the one man, it is difficult to judge when one replaced the other.

[25] *Laing Chrs.*, no. 553; M. Dilworth, "The Social Origins of Scottish Medieval Monks", *ante*, xx (1978-80) 205.

[26] *Scots Peerage* [hereafter *SP*], vii, 371; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

[27] *James V Letters*, 189.

[28] *Acts of Council (Public Affairs)* [hereafter, *ADCP*], 468; *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, xi, pt. 6 (Hamilton) no. 66. I owe the date 1536 for his resignation and death to Professor I.B. Cowan.

[29] SRO, E4/2, Thirds of Benefices, fos. 81-2. The 18 alleged portions in Jedburgh, Restennet and Canonbie may indicate the number existing at some previous date.

[30] *Accounts of the Collectors of Thirds of Benefices, 1561-1572*, ed. G. Donaldson (Scot. Hist. Soc., 1949) [hereafter *Thirds of Benefices*], 291.

Augustinian cell; this and the not too common name make the identification likely. Moscrop, already a canon in 1516, was elderly in 1563 and he does not feature in lists of ministers in 1567 and later, nor in subsequent Jedburgh documents.

Patrick Plenderleith is attested at Jedburgh from 1528 to 1568,[31] James Oliver from 1542 to 1581.[32] The latter is called prior of Canonbie in 1571-73,[33] though continuing to reside at Jedburgh. William Todryk is unlikely to be the man of that name at Jedburgh in 1516 but may be the one who signed in 1528 and 1547. He is attested at Jedburgh from then until 1581[34] and was alive in 1583, but all the canons were dead by 1588.[35]

One main reason for the small size of the community at Jedburgh must surely have been the state of the buildings. They were in disrepair *c.* 1477, were described as ruinous in 1502, and were burnt by the English in 1523, 1544 and 1545.[36] Perhaps Jedburgh suffered more than the other Border abbeys through being the furthest south. On the other hand, medieval sources often, for one reason or another, tend to exaggerate; ordinations were held in the abbey church in 1550,[37] which would indicate that it was not completely ruined.

There were 27 monks at Melrose in 1512, which must be considered a minimum in the absence of other documents that might supply names of absentees. In 1527 there were 35 monks. Thereafter the community declined, no new recruits being admitted, and by 1556 it numbered only 12. An agreement between monks and commendator was then arrived at, whereby 16 monks were to constitute the community. Five novices were admitted and in 1560 there were at Melrose these five young men and (at the most) eleven older monks. In 1562 there were 13 monks at Melrose. By 1586 only one was still a conventual and he lived into the seventeenth century.

One of the five new recruits, Thomas Halliwell, was reader at Melrose 1574-86 and doubtless resided in his monastic quarters during that time; he died in autumn 1586. Another of the five, John Watson junior, exercised his priesthood in 1569. It is unlikely that James Ramsay, also one of the five, served as reader or minister, though there were three of his name serving in the reformed Kirk. In Melrose parish itself, the minister in 1568-69 was John Watson; it is possible that this was the older monk, John Watson senior, or the new recruit, John

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[31] See also SRO, CH6/6/3, fos. 14-20.
[32] See also *ibid.* fos. 14-30; SRO, GD40/1/200, 40/3/389.
[33] SRO, CH6/6/1, fo. 38v; SRO, RH6/2286.
[34] See also SRO, CH6/6/3, fos. 20, 30; SRO, RH6/2286; SRO, GD40/3/389.
[35] SRO, CH6/6/1, fo. 86v; SRO, RSS, 58, fo. 73. *Laing Chrs.* no. 1000, mentioning the decease of the whole community, is not dated 1580 but the 1580s: day, month and final figure of the year have been left blank, instead of being filled in.
[36] *ADCP*, p. lx; *MRHS*, 92.
[37] Fraser, *Keir*, 399-400.

Watson junior (who exercised his priesthood in 1569), but there are difficulties in either identification.[38]

Melrose differs from the other Border abbeys in having a larger community and also because it is clear that the decline in numbers was not primarily due to material destruction. The abbey suffered damage in 1545, but by then numbers had apparently already dropped from 35 to 19. The slow decline continued, 15 being found in 1553. Certainly it would appear that the commendator James Stewart milked the abbey instead of looking after it, but he was not effectively in charge until the late 1540s and he was also commendator of Kelso. It is difficult to determine to what extent the different picture at Melrose in the 1550s is due merely to the fuller documentation which has survived, and whether conditions were similar at Kelso and other monasteries.

At Dryburgh, no evidence is to be found before November 1536, when 13 canons signed.[39] Three documents in 1537-38 have 17 names,[40] perhaps the entire resident community, but to it must added David Brodie, vicar of Gullane in 1539,[41] and possibly others. In 1547 there were 12 and at least one vicar;[42] in 1554-58, 11 and at least two vicars;[43] from September 1559 to July 1560, ten and at least two vicars.[44] In 1561-63 one finds nine signing documents and there were also three absent vicars.[45] Six canons signed in 1571,[46] and only three from 1574 on.[47] The only new name found after 1537 is Robert Anderson, who signed as subprior in his first document in 1547; one presumes therefore that he had been absent, perhaps as a vicar, in 1536-38. In the light of the fragmentary evidence, one can tentatively say that no new recruits were received after 1537.

John Turnbull was at Dryburgh 1536-38 but did not sign in 1547 and thereafter (except for one document in 1563); it can be tentatively assumed that in 1538-47 he became vicar of Lessuden (now St Boswells), in which post he is found in April 1567.[48] He was reader at Lessuden

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[38] Dilworth, "Monks and Ministers", 202-3.

[39] D. Erskine, *Annals and Antiquities of Dryburgh* (2nd edn., 1836), 119, 208.

[40] *Dryburgh Liber* [hereafter, *Dryb. Lib.*], 280-6.

[41] W. Scott, *Memorials of the Haliburtons* (Grampian Club and Wm. Paterson, Edinburgh, 1877), 33.

[42] *Dryb. Lib.*, 287-9, where for "John Bull" one must surely read "John Chatto", found before and after.

[43] *Ibid.*, 290-2; SRO, GD1/220/67, J.S. Richardson Writs; GD6/1180, Brooke of Biel Muniments. It should be noted that the MS. calendar of the last-mentioned document has one canon too many, having transcribed "Dene Mowngho Wilson" as "John Mown, John Wilson".

[44] *Dryb. Lib.*, 292-97; SRO, GD98, William Douglas papers, vol. x, 70.

[45] *Laing Chrs.*, no. 727; *Dryb. Lib.*, 297-302.

[46] SRO, GD6/1181. It should be noted, however, that the date (day, month and final figure "ellevin" of year) was filled in with different ink; the signatures could therefore be earlier.

[47] *Dryb. Lib.*, 303-14; *Laing Chrs.*, no. 1006.

[48] *Reg. Mag. Sig.* [hereafter *RMS*], iv, no. 2140.

and perhaps also at Bedrule and Abbotrule in 1576,[49] and was dead by 1585.[50] It can similarly be assumed that George Haliburton, who signed at Dryburgh 1536-47, became vicar of Gullane in 1547-54; he was in arrears for his third in 1566-72,[51] showing that he was not serving in the reformed Church. He was, however, reader at Gullane in 1574.[52] He was deceased vicar by 1585.[53] John Chatto signed at Dryburgh from 1536 to July 1560 and (on the same reasoning) became vicar of Pencaitland between then and August 1561. He did not, however, serve in the reformed Church and was deprived of his vicarage in 1577 for not making the required Confession of Faith.[54]

Three canons, James Jameson and Mungo Wilson in Dryburgh and Robert Milne in Mertoun, were summoned by the privy council for exercising their priesthood in 1569.[55] All three continued to sign documents at Dryburgh into the 1580s, and Jameson was dead by 1585.[56] The last-named, Robert Milne, was reader in 1574 and 1576 at Mertoun,[57] where he had acted as a priest some years before, but probably continued to reside at Dryburgh, only about two miles distant.

In the period 1536-61, apparently, three canons departed to parishes and one returned to Dryburgh. In that same period, the resident community dwindled from 17 to nine. One important reason for this was shared with the other Border abbeys: the destruction inflicted by the English in 1544 and 1545, as well as that in 1523.[58]

Traditionally, monastic communities elect one of their own number, or at least a member of the same order, to be their abbot. In the late middle ages, however, this right had been eroded by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities, so that in Scotland it became increasingly rare for a religious to be appointed abbot. Increasingly, too, the commendator system came into operation, and the persons appointed retained their non-monastic status.

The present study is confined to abbots who held office in the period 1500-1560, and of necessity only selected detail can be given of each. The aim is to establish the succession of abbots and to show the kind of person they were, that is, their social background, previously-held clerical offices, and so on. It should be possible to judge what

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[49] *Register of Ministers, etc.* (Maitland Club, 1830), 87. He can surely be identified as the Lessuden reader of the same name, but the John Turnbull at Bedrule/Abbotrule (8 and 12 miles away respectively) could be another man. These three places lacked readers in 1574 (*Wodrow Misc.*, 375).

[50] SRO, CH4/1/2, Register of Presentations to Benefices, fos. 136v, 138v.

[51] *Thirds of Benefices*, 278.

[52] *Wodrow Misc.*, 371.

[53] SRO, CH4/1/2, fo. 140. See also Haws, *Clergy*, 102.

[54] *RSS*, vii, no. 960. See also Haws, *Clergy*, 197.

[55] *Reg. Privy Council*, ii, 40.

[56] *Dryb. Lib.*, 303-14; *Laing Chrs.*, nos. 1006, 1077; SRO, CH4/1/2, fo. 128.

[57] *Wodrow Misc.*, 375; *Register of Ministers*, 87.

[58] *MRHS*, 101.

difference (if any) there was between the monasteries with regard to their superiors, despite the four abbeys belonging to different orders.

At Kelso, the series of superiors who ruled in the sixteenth century begins with ROBERT KER, who was provided as abbot by bulls of 5 November 1468[59] and continued in office despite opposition.[60] Robert, abbot, is documented from 1473 to 8 February 1505/6.[61] He was of a notable Border family and in 1478 appointed his brother, Walter Ker of Cessford, justiciar and bailie of Kelso abbey.[62] Cessford is about six miles south of Kelso.

ANDREW STEWART was lord high treasurer, bishop of Caithness and commendator of Fearn when appointed to Kelso in November 1511. He was a kinsman of the king, his father being a priest of noble birth. In the confused situation following on Flodden, it was proposed that he should be translated to other prelacies, but he retained Kelso until his death on 17 June 1517.[63] Probably he never resided at Kelso.

In November 1513, it was reported that a brother of Andrew Ker of Ferniehirst had forced his way into Kelso abbey.[64] This was no doubt THOMAS KER, who took the habit and began to intromit with abbatial affairs. When the proposed transfer of Andrew Stewart to other prelacies fell through, the latter protested against this intrusion, but the government followed no consistent policy. Indeed, in August 1515 ''Thomas abbot of Kelso'' was sworn in to assist his brother as Warden of the Marches.[65] The situation was resolved by Stewart's death, and Thomas was provided as abbot in December 1517.[66] He remained in office until his death in 1534.

Brief mention should also be made of ANDREW FORMAN, bishop of Moray and commendator of Pittenweem, who got bulls for Kelso 18 July 1511 and apparently intended to make good his claim when Andrew Stewart should cease to be abbot. When provided as archbishop of Bourges in 1513, he got papal licence to keep his right to Kelso.[67] In June 1517 Forman, now archbishop of St Andrews, produced his bulls of 'regress' (i.e. the right he had temporarily ceded

[59] Cameron, *Apostolic Camera* [hereafter, *ACSB*], 64; *CPL*, xii, 694-5.
[60] *CPL*, xii, 315; xiii, 18.
[61] *Kelso Liber*, Preface p. xv, 425-30; *RMS*, ii, nos. 1800, 2552; *Acts of Lord Auditors*, 172; *Acts of Council* (1839), 26, 313, 413-14; (1918), 266.
[62] *SP*, vii, 323, 324-5, 327; *Cal. Docs. Scot.*, iv, no. 1452.
[63] *MRHS*, 68, 102; Dowden, *Bishops*, 247-8; *Kelso Liber*, Preface, p. xv.
[64] *LP Henry VIII*, i, no. 2443.
[65] *ADCP*, 7, 18, 34, 53, 72; *James V Letters*, 4, 6, 13. These years are summarised in J. Herkless and R.K. Hannay, *The Archbishops of St Andrews* (1907-15) [hereafter Herkless & Hannay, *Archbishops*], ii, 198-9; *James V Letters*, 46, 47-8.
[66] *MRHS*, 68; Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 168; iii, 481. For the consistorial process, summarised in part, see *James V Letters*, 47-8, 54-5.
[67] Dowden, *Bishops*, 166; Herkless & Hannay, *Archbishops*, ii, 73.

was to return to him) but the Scottish government stood firm and Ker was provided.[88]

Thomas Ker was nephew of Abbot Robert Ker, being the son of Robert's brother Thomas, first of Ferniehirst.[69] He was parson of Yetholm and provost of Dunglass.[70] It is understandable that the government wished to have a powerful man as abbot in the Borders, and it was to Kelso's advantage to have a member of a powerful local family as abbot. Ferniehirst is a dozen miles from Kelso.

On 31 October 1534 James V, now 22, nominated his eldest bastard son, JAMES STEWART, in his fifth year, to be commendator of Kelso.[71] Rome duly made the provision on 12 January 1535.[72] In 1541 James became commendator of Melrose as well. He declined to go to France with his half-sister, Queen Mary, in 1548 and attended the provincial council at Edinburgh in November 1549;[73] he did, however, go to France in 1550 and was still there in the summer of 1552.[74] He was dead by 28 October 1557.[75]

The CARDINAL OF LORRAINE was provided to Kelso and perhaps also to Melrose in April 1559 and his bulls for Kelso were sent to him early in 1560.[76] Mary of Guise was his sister, and Mary Queen of Scots (then in France) his niece. His sister's death and the Reformation made the appointment ineffective.

WILLIAM KER received provision from Rome some time after June 1559, when a pension was granted from Kelso revenues; the pension is mentioned in the bulls of provision.[77] He was in possession of Kelso until his death in 1566.[78] He was a nephew of Abbot Thomas Ker, being the son of the latter's brother Ralph.[79]

At Jedburgh, the series of abbots begins with a man who was a member of the order, though not of the same house. THOMAS CRANSTON was an Augustinian canon of St Andrews and a member of the papal household, when on 7 April 1484 he was provided as abbot.[80] In February 1484/5 he was being kept out of the abbacy (which is perhaps connected with the setting aside of the election of one

[88] *ADCP*, 95-6; *James V Letters*, 46-8; *LP Henry VIII*, ii, nos. 3594-97. Forman's right of "access" in *James V Letters* and Herkless & Hannay, *Archbishops*, ii, 199 would be better translated as "accession".
[89] *SP*, vii, 324; v, 50-1, 53-4.
[70] *James V Letters*, 47; *Acta Facultatis Artium Universitatis Sanctiandree, 1413-1588*, ed. A.I. Dunlop (Scot.Hist.Soc., 1964), 276.
[71] *James V Letters*, 279.
[72] *MRHS*, 68; *James V Letters*, 287.
[73] *Hamilton Papers*, ii, 618; Patrick, *Statutes*, 85-6.
[74] *ADCP*, 605, 616, 618.
[75] *RSS*, v, no. 227.
[76] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 169, 200; *Papal Negotiations with Mary Queen of Scots* (Scot.Hist.Soc., 1901), 28, 30, 40, 42.
[77] *RSS*, v, no. 1428.
[78] *Ibid*; SRO, RH6/1996; *Reg. Privy Council*, i, 470, 485; *Kelso Liber*, Preface, p. xvi.
[79] *SP*, v, 53, 55-6.
[80] *CPL*, xiii, 168; *ACSB*, 83.

William).[81] Thomas, abbot, is found 1487-94.[82] Jedburgh was vacant 27 April 1502 by his death. In 1492 he had received provision to Dunfermline but this remained without effect. He was of noble birth and clearly a clerical careerist.[83]

ROBERT BLACKADDER was archbishop of Glasgow when made commendator 27 April 1502, and is found with the latter title 1502-4. The pope accepted his resignation 18 April 1505.[84] He was brother to Sir Patrick Blackadder of Tulliallan (near Kincardine on Forth) but the family was of Border origin and intermarried with the Humes.[85]

HENRY ALANE was provided on 18 May 1505 and resigned his prebend in Aberdeen.[86] Clearly, he is the Henry Alane, financial official and archdeacon of Dunblane, found in treasury and exchequer records up to February 1504/5.[87] He is found in these records with the title of Jedburgh from July 1505.[88] He is also found in privy seal and great seal records from November 1505 to January 1512.[89] He was alive 13 July 1512 but dead some time before 12 October 1512.[90] To judge from his frequent occurrence in government records, he was a permanent official at court and can have spent little time at Jedburgh.

JOHN HUME was a secular cleric when nominated on 12 October 1512.[91] He sat as a lord of council from 22 October[92] and played a part in public affairs until the 1550s. In or before 1551 he ceded the abbacy to Andrew Hume, while retaining the fruits.[93] He was the second son of the second Lord Hume and brother to the third and fourth Lords.[94] Five of his children were legitimated and a sixth is recorded.[95]

ANDREW HUME is found from 1551, with John Hume and then alone,[96] and continued as commendator into the 1590s. He was the son of the fourth Lord Hume and brother to the fifth Lord. John, his predecessor, is explicitly called his uncle in one document.[97]

[81] *Acts of Council* (1839), *107; *CPL*, xiii, 168.
[82] SRO, CH6/6/1, fo. 2; J. Watson, *Jedburgh Abbey* (1894), 77-8.
[83] *CPL*, xiv, 43; xiii, 168.
[84] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 191-2; SRO, CH6/6/1, fo. 1; Pitcairn, *Trials*, i, *41-4.
[85] *Glasgow Registrum*, p. 506, 538; *SP*, i, 189; iii, 281.
[86] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 192; *RSS*, i, no. 1168. See also *RMS*, ii, no. 1778. Editorial translations of "Alani" as Fitzalan are wrong.
[87] *Exch. Rolls*, xii, index s.v. "Alane"; *Treasurer Accts.*, ii, 160, 479.
[88] *Exch. Rolls*, xii, 650; *Exch. Rolls*, xii, xiii, index s.v. "Jedburgh"; *Treasurer Accts.*, iii, iv, index s.v. "Jedburgh".
[89] *RSS*, i, index s.v. "Alane"; *RMS*, ii, index s.v. "Jedburgh". See also SRO, RH6/757.
[90] *Exch. Rolls*, xiii, 401 (for the month see p. xxiii); *James IV Letters*, no. 486.
[91] *James IV Letters*, no. 486, where "Lynne" is surely a misreading.
[92] *ADCP*, index, s.v. "Jedburgh".
[93] Besides public records, see SRO, CH6/6/1, fos. 3-27; CH6/6/3, fo. 10.
[94] *SP*, iv, 453-54.
[95] *RSS*, ii, no. 4512; iv, nos. 181, 1512; *RMS*, iv, nos. 310, 2046; SRO, CH6/6/1, fo. 78v.
[96] SRO, CH6/6/1, *passim*; SRO, GD40/1/190; *RMS*, iv, no. 2473; *Treasurer Accts.*, x, 339.
[97] *SP*, iv, 460, 463; SRO, CH6/6/1, fo. 78v.

The last two decades of the fifteenth century present a confused picture at Melrose. John Brown, a Dominican friar, was provided in 1483 as coadjutor and successor to the elderly sick abbot.[98] In September 1486 he resigned and was granted a pension. In his place David Brown, parson of Nevay (and perhaps a relative), was provided.[99]

On 29 July 1489 BERNARD BELL was provided as abbot *per cessionem*.[100] Even before then, on 3 January 1488/9, Bernard, abbot, is found,[101] though he was said to be not yet "blissit and confermit" in February 1489/90.[102] The story of Bell's appointment is given in a later and very prejudiced source, but the facts contained in it are likely to be accurate.[103] The Melrose community did not accept David Brown's provision and elected Bernard Bell, who administered the abbey for three years, supported by James III (died June 1488), and was then provided in the fourth year of his administration. He is found as abbot 1489-99.[104] The pope accepted his resignation 1 February 1503.[105]

In November 1500 WILLIAM TURNBULL, parson of Annan, went to Rome on the king's business and was given leave to purchase a benefice below that of bishop.[106] On 1 February 1503 he was provided as abbot and William, abbot, is found March 1503/4-June 1506.[107] In October 1506, however, James IV was complaining to Rome about the situation in Melrose, saying that Turnbull was not the rightful abbot, as he had succeeded the wrongfully appointed Bernard Bell. Six months later, on 1 April 1507, Turnbull was nominated to Coupar Angus, exchanging abbeys with Robert, who was abbot there.[108]

This man was ROBERT BEATON. Robert, abbot of Melrose, is found until 1521.[109] The abbacy was vacant by his death in July 1524.[110] He was the third son of John Beaton of Balfour and brother to Archbishop James Beaton of Glasgow.[111] His tenure of office was undisputed and surely gave to Melrose a much-needed period of peace, but the abbey must have suffered financially as well as spiritually through the rivalries of the previous decades. John Brown's pension

[98] *ACSB*, 82; *CPL*, xiii, 150-1.
[99] *ACSB*, 221, 297, 337; *CPL*, xv, nos. 86, 116.
[100] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 198; *CPL*, xv, nos. 1220-1.
[101] *Melrose Liber*, 617-18.
[102] *Acts of Lords Auditors*, 134-5.
[103] *James V Letters*, nos. 48-51.
[104] *Melrose Liber*, 600-25; *Yester Writs*, 234.
[105] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 198.
[106] *RSS*, i, nos. 602, 604; see also *RMS*, ii, no. 2131.
[107] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 198; *RMS*, ii, no. 2775; *Melrose Liber*, 601-2.
[108] *James IV Letters*, nos. 48-51, 91, 93. The dispute over Melrose, before and after Turnbull's appointment, is too lengthy and complex to be more than mentioned.
[109] *RMS*, ii, no. 1510; *Melrose Liber*, 630-2.
[110] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 199; *James V Letters*, 110-11.
[111] *RSS*, i, no. 2823; Macfarlane, *Genealogical Coll.*, i, 5-6.

was a matter of dispute in 1495;[112] Bell was a pensioner of Mauchline (a dependency of Melrose) in 1509;[113] and Beaton made a financial settlement with David Brown in 1510.[114]

Albany left Scotland finally in May 1524, when James V was just twelve, and the affairs of Melrose reflect the power struggle which ensued. The earl of Angus (the king's step-father) wanted the abbacy for his brother, William Douglas.[115] The queen-mother supported John Maxwell, abbot of Dundrennan, and solicited the help of her brother, Henry VIII.[116] Maxwell received royal nomination in July 1524 but ANDREW DURIE, supported by Albany and Archbishop James Beaton, was provided by bulls of 6 January 1525. The provision was repeated on 6 October.[117] Despite opposition, including acts of parliament passed against him, he was admitted to the temporalities 17 December 1526[118] and was abbot until provided to the see of Galloway 22 August 1541.[119] Durie was the nephew of Archbishop Beaton and thus the nephew also of his predecessor at Melrose.[120]

On 3 July 1541 James V nominated his illegitimate son JAMES STEWART, already commendator of Kelso, to receive Melrose as well.[121] The boy, now eleven, was provided on 22 August, though the bulls had not arrived by November.[122] He was dead by 28 October 1557.

There is doubt as to who was provided on 17 April 1559, whether it was the Cardinal of Lorraine[123] or James (Michael?) Balfour.[124] A royal letter of 25 March 1564 granted Melrose to MICHAEL BALFOUR ''of new'', though he had previously received provision from Rome.[125] He was a brother of Balfour of Denmilne and was a canon of Dunkeld.[126]

The abbot at Dryburgh at the end of the 15th century would seem to have been a clerical careerist. This was ANDREW LIDDERDALE, who was a secular priest and vicar of Stirling, and possibly also vicar of Roberton, when provided in September 1482, after the death of two rival candidates for the abbacy, and he received fresh provision in

[112] *Acts of Council* (1839), 418-19.
[113] *Melrose Liber*, 604.
[114] *RSS*, i, no. 2070; *James IV Letters*, no. 311, also no. 335.
[115] *LP Henry VIII*, iv, nos. 878, 1004, 1222, 1593. A useful account of the struggle over Melrose is given in J. Morton, *The Monastic Annals of Teviotdale* (1832), 239-40.
[116] *James V Letters*, 110; *LP Henry VIII*, iv, nos. 1026, 1328.
[117] *James V Letters*, 110-11, 126-7; Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 199.
[118] *Acts Parl. Scot.*, ii, 30, 310, 312; *RSS*, i, no. 3584.
[119] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 159, 199; *James V Letters*, 425-6.
[120] *Ibid.* 111; Macfarlane, *Genealogical Coll.*, i, 7, 23.
[121] *James V Letters*, 425-7.
[122] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 199; *James V Letters*, 433. His age is taken from *ibid.* 279; Brady's text makes him two years older.
[123] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 200.
[124] *MRHS*, 77.
[125] *RSS*, v, no. 1656.
[126] *RSS*, v, no. 2547.

September 1483.[127] He is found as abbot 1489-1506 but was no longer in office by November 1509.

Two alleged abbots or abbatial candidates at this time should be discounted. James Stewart, parson of Ancrum, was legitimated in July 1507;[128] whatever credence is given to the view that this was to enable him to become abbot, there is no evidence of any further step in that direction. It is said that David Finlayson, canon of Dryburgh and vicar of Gullane, was elected by the community in 1509 and presented to James IV for nomination to Rome. This may very well be true, but Finlayson was not provided.[129]

ANDREW FORMAN was bishop of Moray and commendator of Pittenweem when provided on 5 November 1509. Some weeks later he was admitted to the temporalities. He retained Dryburgh when provided to the archbishopric of Bourges in 1513. He resigned Dryburgh in order to become archbishop of St Andrews, the date of his translation to that see being 13 November 1514. Probably he spent very little time at Dryburgh, and indeed in 1510 and 1511 was mostly abroad on diplomatic business.[130] Forman belonged to a Border family linked by marriage to noble families in the Borders.[131]

The first reference to his successor, JAMES OGILVIE, was on 24 September 1515, when there is a reference to "Master James Ogilvie, now my lord of Dryburgh". He had the title of Dryburgh in March 1515/6, and was admitted to the temporalities in August 1516.[132] He is found as commendator of Dryburgh 1516-17 and died at Paris, 30 May 1518. He was parson of Kinkell and a canon of Aberdeen cathedral. Dryburgh was given to him, it was said, in compensation for his appointment as bishop of Aberdeen being prevented by the earl of Huntly. He cannot have spent much time at Dryburgh, being occupied in government and diplomatic business. He was son of Sir Walter Ogilvie (ancestor of the Lords Banff) and brother to Sir William Ogilvie, the lord high treasurer.[133]

DAVID HAMILTON was bishop of Argyll when appointed administrator after Ogilvie's death. The Dryburgh community elected one of their own number as abbot and were disciplined for doing so without royal authority.[134] Later, on 13 May 1519, Hamilton was appointed commendator. Documentation about him is scarce but he witnessed great seal charters up to 4 April 1522 and is said to be mentioned as commendator on 4 December 1522.[135] He was dead by 13 December 1523 and probably died not long before that date. He was

[127] *CPL*, xiii, 811-12, 833-4; *ACSB*, 78-9, 82, 182.
[128] *RSS*, i, no. 1509.
[128] The source, where no other reference is given, is *Dryb. Lib.*, p. xix.
[130] Dowden, *Bishops*, 166, 38-9. See also Herkless & Hannay, *Archbishops*, ii, 42, 73, 77.
[131] Dowden, *Bishops*, 167; *SP*, iv, 451; vii, 367; *Dryb. Lib.*, p. xx.
[132] *Treasurer Accts.*, v, 40; *RSS*, i, nos. 2727, 2796.
[133] His career is outlined in *SP*, ii, 5-6; Dowden, *Bishops*, 135-6; *Dryb. Lib.*, p. xxi.
[134] *St Andrews Formulare*, i, 1-3; *ADCP*, 130-1.
[135] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 173; *RMS*, iii, no. 276; *Dryb. Lib.*, p. xxi.

a natural son of James Lord Hamilton and thus a half-brother of the first earl of Arran.[136]

JAMES STEWART was provost of Dumbarton collegiate church and a canon of Glasgow cathedral when nominated by Albany 13 December 1523.[137] There ensued a two years' delay (perhaps because of rival nominations, as at Melrose). Stewart received provision 8 January 1525/6, retaining a pension from Dumbarton revenues, and was admitted to the temporalities the following October.[138] In November 1529 he was nominated as bishop of the Isles, but is found still as abbot in 1534-38 and was dead by 7 November 1539.[139] He was noble, of the Lennox family and related by blood to many Hebridean nobles.[140] There is mention of a natural son, in whose favour he proposed to resign Dryburgh;[141] also of a natural daughter, who is said to have married into a local family. Neither features among the surviving legitimations and the daughter in particular is suspect, being found in a late and derivative source.[142]

When nominated on 7 November 1539, THOMAS ERSKINE was chancellor of Glasgow diocese and vicar of Falkirk.[143] There was delay as James V resisted attempts to provide Robert Wauchope (later archbishop of Armagh) instead, but by March 1541 Erskine's appointment was assured[144] and he used the title. His provision was made 6 April 1541.[145] He is found as commendator in February 1546/7.[146] He was the second son of the fifth Lord Erskine and became Master of Erskine when his elder brother was killed at Pinkie in September 1547.[147] He was still called commendator of Dryburgh on 20 July 1548 when he resigned as chancellor of Glasgow.[148]

JOHN ERSKINE was Thomas' brother and was commendator of Inchmahome when, on 20 July 1548, he was given crown presentation as chancellor of Glasgow diocese on Thomas' resignation. He is said to have been commendator of Dryburgh on 12 July 1548.[149] By 1 December 1552 he had succeeded as Master of Erskine, Thomas having died, and on 12 December he resigned as chancellor of Glasgow.[150] In

[136] For his career see *SP*, iv, 354-5; Dowden, *Bishops*, 387-9.
[137] *James V Letters*, 95.
[138] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 174; D.E.R. Watt, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae Medii Aevi* (1969), 353; *RSS*, i, no. 3519.
[138] *James V Letters*, 162-3, 275, 286; *Dryb. Lib.*, 279-86.
[140] *James V Letters*, 162; D.G. Manuel, *Dryburgh Abbey* (1922), 264-5.
[141] *James V Letters*, 286.
[142] *Memorials of the Haliburtons* (Grampian Club, 1877), 31-2. *Dryb. Lib.*, p. xxii changes the daughter's name, thereby obviating a difficulty in the story.
[143] *James V Letters*, 380.
[144] *Ibid.*, 392-411, 421-2.
[145] *RMS*, iii, no. 2321; Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 174.
[146] *Dryb. Lib.*, 287-9.
[147] *SP*, v, 611.
[148] *RSS*, iii, no. 2869.
[149] *Dryb. Lib.*, p. xxiv.
[150] *RSS*, iv, nos. 1773, 1814.

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March and July 1555 he still held Dryburgh.[151] In November 1555 John Master of Erskine received sasine of the family lands and his father was certainly dead by 24 January 1555/6; John was thus sixth Lord Erskine.[152] He resigned Dryburgh and later became earl of Mar and the well-known Regent Mar.

DAVID ERSKINE was the nephew of his two predecessors, being the natural son of their eldest brother, killed at Pinkie.[153] When in his 24th year, he was provided to Dryburgh on 17 July 1556; he was also given Inchmahome and had received crown presentation as chancellor of Glasgow on John's resignation in December 1552.[154] He remained in possession of Dryburgh until after 1608.[155] In the period before 1560, given their plurality of offices, the three Erskines may have spent very little time at Dryburgh.

The communities of the four abbeys differed from each other in various ways. For instance, that at Melrose was larger than the others, that at Jedburgh smaller. That at Melrose diminished earlier than the others, that at Kelso more steeply. The Melrose monks disputed with their superior in a way that is not recorded for the other abbeys. These factors, however, were extrinsic to the rule and observance of each abbey. The only significant difference between the communities would seem to be that some Dryburgh canons resided as vicars in appropriated parishes.

All four abbeys had superiors from some powerful family succeeding each other: Kers and Humes (both local families) at Kelso and Jedburgh respectively, Erskines at Dryburgh, Beaton/Durie at Melrose. Kelso and Melrose had the same royal bastard, possibly followed by the same cardinal and royal kinsman. In the closing decades of the fifteenth century, all four abbeys had rival candidates, and at Jedburgh and Dryburgh the successful man was a clerical careerist. In the second half of James IV's reign, this type gave way to bishops and royal officials: Stewart at Kelso, Blackadder and Alane at Jedburgh, Forman at Dryburgh (followed by Ogilvie and Hamilton after Flodden), while the appointment of Turnbull and Beaton at Melrose was cynically manipulated by James. Disputes over the abbacies continued: after Flodden, at Kelso; after Albany's departure, at Melrose and perhaps Dryburgh; in 1539-41, at Dryburgh; in 1557-60, at Kelso and Melrose.

If the only clear case of an incelibate abbot was at Jedburgh, Stewart at Dryburgh was not above suspicion. Investigation would no doubt show that, in all the abbeys, pensions were granted from abbatial revenues to rival candidates or royal favourites, even if not to the same extent as at Melrose.

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[151] *Dryb. Lib.*, 290-2; *SP*, v, 610.
[152] *SP*, v, 610, 612-15; *Exch. Rolls*, xviii, 593-6; *RSS*, iv, no. 3128.
[153] *SP*, v, 611.
[154] Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, i, 175, 190; *RSS*, iv, no. 1814.
[155] *Dryb. Lib.*, pp. xxvi-xxix.

It is abundantly clear that abbots were not appointed for the good of the communities. On the contrary, superiors were appointed for reasons of state or selfish gain, with no regard for the different observance in each of the four abbeys. In the sixteenth century, indeed, the Border abbeys were not regarded as spiritual power-houses but as sources of revenue and position for royal servants or predatory individuals.